

1 Pugnacious Reformation or "Civil War"? A Reconsideration of 2 the American Civil War

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7 **Abstract**

8 Civil war in its generic outlook implies a war between citizens of the same nation or a war
9 within a nation. This article is a reflection on the American civil war in its origins, nature,
10 scope and aftermath. The thesis in the paper conflicts with the label (American Civil War)
11 given to the violent upheaval that featured between the Southern and Northern states of
12 America in the 1860s. It posits that the label emanated from a facile outlook; that a more
13 in-depth and critical analysis of the occurrence will occasion the birth of a healthier depiction
14 of the event. The paper therefore, clinches within the premises of the aforementioned that the
15 label- American Civil War is a misnomer; it suggests that a more befitting term could be
16 ?American Pugnacious.

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18 **Index terms**— America, civil war, pugnacious reformation, economy.

19 **1 Introduction**

20 The sixth decade of the nineteenth century marked a period of violent revolution in the American society; it was
21 the period that witnessed what has been commonly referred to as the American Civil War. In broad terms, civil
22 war could be described as an armed conflict causing more than one thousand deaths, challenging the sovereignty
23 of an internationally recognized state, occurring within the recognized boundaries of that state, involving the
24 state as one of the principal combatants, including rebels with the ability to mount an organized opposition and
25 involving parties concerned with the prospect of living together in the same political unit after the end of the
26 war. ?? Events of such have been a reoccurring experience in global history. The American situation between
27 1861 and 1865 was not a deviation from this description, it thus reveals why the American Civil War was also
28 regarded as the war between states. The American Civil War was indeed a key event in the history of America. It
29 occasioned grave mayhem and outrageous scourge in the American human and societal civilization.

30 The war was set on stage when the confederates' army attacked Fort Sumter on 12th April, 1861 and it was
31 brought to an end on 9th April, 1865 when General Lee surrendered to General Grant of the Union Army at
32 Appomattox Court House. The war was in all regards the first modern war with an unprecedented scope; it has
33 been widely regarded as the first total war in global history as a result of the entanglement of all factions of the
34 society. George Brown and David Shi share a similar view when they argued that:

35 The civil war was not neatly self-contained; it was a total war, fought not solely by professional armies but
36 by and against whole societies, farms became battlefields, cities were transformed into armed encampments, and
37 homes were commandeered for field hospitals? was modern in that much killing was distant, impersonal and
38 mechanical. 2 Fundamentally, it must be stated that the American Civil War was a combating and pugnacious
39 contact or armed conflict between the seceding American Confederate States of the South which was made up of
40 the eleven slave states of the South and the North which housed the American federal polity; it represented the
41 Union of the American states.

42 The paper attempts a review of the label (American Civil War) accorded to the socio-political challenge that
43 bedevilled the American civilization betwixt 1961 and 1965. The paper is presented thus: First, it tries to survey

3 III. AFTERMATHS OF THE 'AMERICAN CIVIL

44 the socio-political and economic formation of Americabefore the war, this constitutes the background to the
45 war; second, it examines the aftermaths of the war in restructuring the American geopolitical, economic and
46 socio-cultural character; third, it attempts an economic discourse on the war. Finally, it concludes the paper by
47 summarizing the key thesis of the article.

48 2 II. American Civilization before the War

49 The American society had developed structures and institutions of political, economic social and cultural relevance
50 to sustain the existence of its civilization before the occurrence of the civil war. After all, the American Civil
51 War (1861-1865) could not have erupted as a result of compatibility, consonance or convenience. Indeed, its
52 occurrence could be associated to dynamic complexities.

53 Slavery constituted an intricate factor in the occurrence of the American Civil War. The institution of slavery
54 was inherent in the origin of the American state; traceably, the 1945 annexation of Texas during the epoch of
55 'Manifest Destiny' welded slavery with the American system. The South had a slave oriented economy and social
56 formation which was incessantly attacked and condemned by the abolitionist of the North of which majority
57 were adherents of the republican party. To the white South this strategy trampled their Constitutional rights. 3
58 Thisgradually gave rise to a perturbed relationship between the Americans of the South and the North sides. In
59 addition the slavery issue heightened the instability of American political formation as the differences between
60 the Republican and Democratic Party became more seemingly irreconcilable.

61 The proliferation of anti-slavery sentiments in the North and among pious republicans as well as the southern
62 low representation in the federal structure coupled with the radical chauvinism of African Americans following
63 the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 signalled daunting threats to the Southerners. On the other hand, the Northerners
64 were sensitive to the increasing power of the federal government which could undermine sacredness of property
65 rights in the future. This was another channel in the American formation that engendered regional tension.

66 Noticeable as slavery and the popular quest for the protection of States' rights in the American formation before
67 the Civil war was sectionalism. In this context, sectionalism refers to the different economies, social structure,
68 customs and political values of the North and South. 4 It was profound in the economic and religious fabric
69 of the people; the South had an agrarian and slavery economic orientation, whilst the North had an industrial
70 economy. This economic variation between the North and the South partly cumulated in the Civil War. In the
71 religious sphere, the ideological disparity between the North and South over the slavery issue led to the division
72 of dominant religious affiliations, i.e. the Catholic and the Presbyterian religious denomination in the South and
73 the North.

74 The emergence of Abraham Lincoln as the president of the United States of America in November 1860 after
75 defeating John C. Breckinridge who was the Southern presidential candidate further aggravated the fragility
76 of the American political, economic and sociocultural formation. Meanwhile, the policies of Lincoln been a
77 republican, was anti-slavery which resulted in the secession of the South from the union of American states to
78 form the Confederate State of America under the auspice of Jefferson Davis who functioned as the president of
79 the confederacy. Notably, this action of secession was regarded as a rebellion to the federal polity and was utterly
80 condemned. An attempt to reverse this was a forward march into war.

81 Thus far, the foregoing have been able to look into the origin, nature and scope of the American civil war, it
82 therefore reveals that the civil war was engendered by the slavery question, antagonistic nationalism, property
83 rights' and sectionalism among others. Apart from the aforementioned, it is apparent that economic dynamism
84 and complexities was a fundamental underpinning influence to the eventuality of the Civil War. Hence, the
85 contradictions in the American civilization before the civil war coupled with the quest to preserve the union of
86 the American states resulted in the American Civil War.

87 3 III. Aftermaths of the 'American Civil

88 War'

89 A war which historians have described as a total war and the first modern war in global history must have
90 occasioned myriad of consequences on virtually all spheres of the American civilization. After all, Harold Faulkner
91 attested to this when he advanced that "its effects upon our industrial, financial, and commercial history were
92 profound". 5 The point of contention here is;what were the consequences of the American civil war? How relevant
93 werethe consequence of the American Civil War to the reformation of the American civilization? This section
94 will engage in tackling these questions.

95 The first visible and physical consequence of the American Civil Wars was massive death and widespread
96 destruction of properties. The mortality rate was extremely high without the number of injured personalities
97 on both factions. It is important to mention that the physical destruction during the war was pervasive. In the
98 South, Places like Charleston and Richmond suffered a huge loss of plantation labour system and investment
99 in slave whilst in the North, the destruction of public and private properties was prevalent. Importantly, the
100 condition of the war was outrageous such that people died more as a result of infections and illness than on the
101 war front.

102 4 According to Davidson, et al.:

103 Approximately 620,000 men on both sides lost their lives? In material terms, the conflict cost an estimated \$20
104 billion, more than 11 times the total amount spent by the federal government from 1789 to 1861. 6 This further
105 reveals that the economy of America after the war was battered as a result of the heavy four year war. The war
106 recorded about 1,030,000 casualties. It adversely affected the American economy, specifically the wealth of the
107 South, whereby income per person in the south dropped to less than 40% to that of North which lasted until
108 well into the 20th century. 7 Consequent on the defeat of the South, partly as a result of the statesmanship of
109 Abraham Lincoln which eventually brought an end to the 'American Civil War'; it holds relevance to quickly
110 make known that President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated by a southerner recalled to be christened John
111 Booth perhaps in retaliation for his anti-southern policies on April 14, 1865 at Ford's Theatre in Washington
112 barely six days after the war ended. Therefore, it is convenient to Volume XV Issue VI Version I

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114 assert that Abraham Lincoln was sacrificed for the peace, unity and reformation of the American states.

115 The union of the states was preserved, the nation was reunited and the southern states were not allowed to
116 secede. In fact, the war wiped out the union's philosophy and ideology of voluntary confederacy which reserved
117 the rights for states to secede and form a stronger federal union which still exists till date.

118 It is interesting to note that the 'American Civil War' brought an end to the institution of slavery in the
119 American society. The Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 and the Thirteen Amendments of 1865 led to the
120 entire abolition of slavery everywhere in America and its territories, the slaves were set loose, which led to the
121 organic union of the African-Americans. As many as 3.5million blacks were freed from the clutches of slavery
122 during the Civil War. 8 Consequently, African-Americans began to achieve equality, but not without pugnacious
123 obstacles. In a way, African-Americans were allowed access to education in the South but with unequal school
124 system; they were given the right to vote and to contest election at diminutive political levels. Albeit still
125 reflecting some traces of social cum racial discrimination; on the long run, job opportunities began to improve
126 for them in the South as well as the commencement of robust inter-racial relationships and marriages. It must
127 be noted that all this were achieved through the formation of Civil Rights Organisation to chart the course for
128 African-Americans total liberation in America. Indeed, these were important social alterations that positioned a
129 sect of the society from being a mere property of another to a status of social equality. The socket of argument
130 at this juncture is that the armed combat between the Northern and Southern state of America occasioned vital
131 modifications in the American social formation.

132 The establishment of the Freedman's Bureau in 1865; the Bureau was a government agency saddled with
133 the responsibility of allocating works, supplies and abandoned as well as confiscated Southern lands among
134 freed African-Americans. In addition to this, the agency was to deliver health care, educational and judicial
135 services by putting up medical clinics, schools for academic study amidst other amenities that would better the
136 existence of African-Americans in the United States. The Freedman's Bureau worked with educated former slaves
137 and northern churches and charities to open up more than 4,300 schools in the South. 9 Industrialism was a
138 remarkable social change that was instigated by the war. Here, the point is that like other reformation that
139 accompanied the war, it stimulated indigenous industrialization. Industrialism began as a result of the increase
140 in wartime production and the development of new technologies. During and after the war, national industries in
141 flour milling, meat packing, clothing, shoe manufacture and machinery making emerged in the American society.
142 Mention must be made of the new innovation and inventions of weapons and munitions to develop and expand
143 military utilization capacities. Thomas Cochran complemented this when he wrote that:

144 Colourful business development in the North adoption of new machines, the quick spread of war contracting,
145 boost given to profits by inflation, and the creation of a group of war millionaires-makes the war years seem not
146 only a period of rapid economic change but also one that created important forces for future growth. 10 However,
147 the reconstruction programme which was aimed at making America to recover its loss during the war also aided
148 industrial development. Therefore, it is apt to posit that the Civil War was a reformation process in itself while
149 the reconstruction era emerged afterward to be one of its inextricable products.

150 In the political sphere, the war dramatically changed the balance of power in the American society. The South
151 as a result of its abundant economic loss and military defeat lost its varied influence in the political firmament of
152 America. Also, the war led to the decline of the American Democratic Party while the Republican Party rose to
153 dominance in American politics. It should be inscribed in mind that the victory of the Union army signalled the
154 triumph of nationalism as the victory was partly as a result of the support of the African-Americans.

155 The 'American Civil War' reformed the military machinery of America and charted a new course in the
156 military history of America. Innovations and inventions as to warfare methods and ammunitions as mentioned
157 earlier were informed by the technological and industrial advancement that was witnessed in the North shortly
158 before and during the war. These developments in the military circle give rise to the use of rifles and rifled
159 artillery as well as the adoption of revolutionized tactics and strategies of warfare. The trench warfare method
160 was implemented on war fields; in addition the union adopted the strategy of attacking the civilian population
161 of the South.

162 Victory on the side of the Union Army in the war opened up the South to military occupation and strict
163 surveillance. The South was partitioned into military provinces and was placed under military control and

6 CONCLUSION

164 authority. The Southern states were then mandated to reapply for admission into the United State of American
165 after fulfilling certain conditions. The militarization of the South was to suppress tendencies of further rebellion
166 in the area until 1877. All these were pugnacious but reformatory in view of the advances it staged up from the
167 pre-existing American civilization.

168 The war was a springboard for societal humanitarianism in America. The establishment of the American
169 Red Cross and other altruistic social clusters. Here, it is important to make mention of Clara Barton who was
170 a staunch republican who went to the battle. The above is a graphical illustration of the industrial production
171 (economy) of the Northern and Southern state of America; it will further be of benefit to this analysis. The chart
172 presents four distinct periods with extension to the period before and after the 'American Civil War', spreading
173 from 1840 to 1900; the periods are; The Pre-war years (1840-60), The Inter-war years (1861-65) as well as
174 the Recovery years (1865-76), and Beyond Recovery years (1877-1900) which are both identified as the end of
175 reconstruction in the graph. The graphic representation reveals that the economy of America during the war
176 was considerably higher than what it was prior to the war especially in the North, while the economy deflation
177 in the South was for obvious factors as noted earlier. Also, the termination of the Civil War in 1865 occasioned
178 a progressive growth and development in the economy of the North and South alike which continued up to 1900.

179 Therefore, it could be deduced that; American had a rapid recovery from the Civil War, in about fifteen years
180 American had already recovered from the war. On this basis, arguably, the war was needed for certain Volume
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182 field with the union soldiers to deliver medical care to them when injured. It was the activities of this valiant
183 feminine character that instigated the establishment of the American Red Cross. Clara Barton is widely regarded
184 as the founder of the American Red Cross.

185 It must also be mentioned within the premises of the above that, after the Civil War, women confronted new
186 responsibilities and enjoyed new occupational duties. The thrust here is that, prior to the war, the female folks
187 were restricted to domestic obligations rather than public works, however, after the Civil War, women began to
188 involve in public affairs such as politics, health delivery services, and military services among others.

189 The American Civil War is one of the reforming politico-economic events in the history of America. This view
190 has been polished by some notable American economic historians of the twentieth century. Charles Beard and
191 Mary Beard in their view referred to the civil war as the Second American Revolution. 11 Here, it is important to
192 state that the position of Beard is conditioned on the reformation that accompanied the Civil War. They furthered
193 by publishing that the so-called Civil War -was a social war, ending in the unquestioned establishment of a new
194 power in the government, making vast changes, arrangement of classes, in the accumulation and distribution
195 of wealth, in the course of industrial development, and in the constitution inherited from the Fathers. 12 By
196 implication the term 'so-called Civil War' used by Beard is a sentiment of the inaptness of the term 'American
197 Civil War'.

198 In a similar vein, Louis Hacker posited that the Civil War signalled the triumph of industrial capitalism in
199 America. ??3 At this time, the thrust of Hacker's argument is that the civil war was in itself the emergence
200 and dominance of the capitalist mode of production in America. Arising from this is that, the economic clout
201 American is globally recognized for is an offshoot of the Civil War, since the economic splendour of America is
202 the handmaid of its capitalist economy.

203 Source: Joseph Davis and Marc D. Weidenmier 14 (nd.) reformation in the American society and to ensure
204 this reformation, the war broke-out. Hence, the commencement of the war was the beginning of the desired
205 reformation.

206 IV.

207 6 Conclusion

208 The label Civil War is a misnomer. In the real sense, the Southern states of America did not galvanize an insurrection;
209 the secession of the South was a pure demonstration of the American foundational ideology of self-determination
210 and equality. However, most cases of Civil Wars are engendered by the quest of belligerents to gain control of
211 the central polity. It is instructive that the term Civil War in its origin could be better traced to seventeenth
212 century England, a period that witnessed a bellicose confrontation between the loyalist and allies of King Charles
213 the First on the one hand and Oliver Cromwell and his parliamentarian supporters on the other hand for political
214 supremacy. In the case of the 'American Civil War', Donald Miller observes that,

215 The South had no designs on the federal government of the North, headquartered in Washington, D. C. It did
216 not want to run that government. The breakaway Southern States asserted their independence, like the American
217 colonies did from Britain eighty-five years before, formed their own Confederate States of America and placed
218 their seat of government in Richmond, Virginia. 15 Nevertheless, on the basis of the rationale that the aftermath
219 of an event ultimately outlives its causes, events such as the 'American Civil War' should be christened in context
220 of its transforming outcomes which have added almost exhaustive reformation to the American system. Even
221 though the era that followed it was regarded as the era of reconstruction, it is undisputable that the idea of
222 reconstruction was an inspiration of the truculent interaction between both sides.

223 On the whole, the American civil War (1861-1865) was a significant event in the history of America as it
224 reformed the nation's political institution, economy and values. It must be stressed that the war was followed
225 by twelve years of reconstruction which occasioned the debate of the fate of the African-American in America

226 and the reconstruction of the nation in an attempt to define the new shape for its union. However, it goes
227 without stating that the Civil War which was recorded as the bloodiest and most destructive war in the history
228 of America also stimulated industrial advancement, political transformation, social equality and development
229 which have placed America in a position of primacy globally in contemporary times. Therefore, within the above
230 premises, it is convenient to opine that the concept of Civil War in its description is incongruous; a healthier
depiction could be America Pugnacious Reformation.¹



Figure 1:

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